

Drewes House
46B-47 King Street
Christiansted
St. Croix
Virgin Islands

HABS No. VI-22

HABS
VI,
1-CHRIS,
43-

PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

DREWES HOUSE

HABS No. VI-22

Location: 46B-47 King Street, Christiansted, St. Croix, Virgin Islands

ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The building is typical of the larger architecturally less pretentious town houses of Christiansted, in the use of materials, the detailing and the construction. Exceptional features are the double curved garden staircase and the brick bathtub. The covered sidewalk, projecting upper stairs, the outer galleries and the main floor on the second story follow the traditional St. Croix house plan.

The original design of the building seems well preserved with the possible exception of the third floor which appears to be of a later date than the rest of the structure.

2. Condition of fabric: The building is in poor condition.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Orientation: The building is located on the west side of Kings Street with its long side toward the street facing southeast. It is built over the sidewalk to the streetline. The sidewalk is enclosed within the ground floor arcade.
2. Overall dimensions: The three-story building is L-shaped, measuring approximately 84' (seven bay front) x 66' (five bays).
3. Foundations: The building has a brick and rubble masonry foundation of undetermined depth. The foundation is articulated on the pillars towards the street and to the rear.
4. Wall construction: The building has a brick masonry ground floor, and two stories of brick arcades one bay deep running the full length of the street side of the building. A horizontal band marks the level of the second floor. The square pillars that support the first-floor arches have band capitals. The arches have keystones. The second-floor arches have a plinth and base with a recessed masonry rail between the pillars. The end panels are decorated. The rest of the second floor and all of the third floor is of a sheathed wood frame construction, shingled and with quoined corner boards in wood.

The interior walls of the first floor are of brick masonry. On the upper floors the walls are of wood frame construction. The second floor of the L is wood frame with a brick masonry facing. The walls are painted yellow ochre with white trim.

5. Openings:

- a. Doorways and doors: The ground floor has double shutter doors of plank construction. The planks are laid crosswise with the outside planks vertical. The principal entrance to the house is from the rear and on the second floor. The exterior doorways on the second floor have solid shutters similar to the ground-floor doors and louvered doors with a solid panel in the lower section.
- b. Windows: The windows on the first floor are equipped only with shutters. They are of the same construction as the first-floor doors mentioned above. On the second floor they are equipped with identical shutter and double movable louvers that open inward. One double eight-light casement sash occurs on the north end of the gallery. The central three bays in the end walls have six-over-six light double hung sash extending to the floor with exterior panelled solid shutters and a wrought iron rail set in between the windows and the doors.

The third floor has four-over-four-light double hung sash with solid exterior shutters.

6. Roof:

- a. Shape, covering: The main section of the building has a hipped roof with corrugated iron roofing on a timber truss. The eaves extend only slightly over the wall and there is no cornice. The L has a gable roof. The L contained the kitchen and had a brick chimney over an open range.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: The ground floor has a gallery to the front and rear. The space between the two galleries is divided into 3 rooms. The L contains one large room.

The second floor has the same floor plan except for an interior staircase to the third floor in the south end of the rear gallery. A cook house is located on the second floor of the L and is separated from the main section by an open terrace. The third floor has a central hallway with four rooms toward the street and three rooms toward the rear.

2. Stairways: There were five stairways: a straight-run brick stairway leading from the rear court to the main entrance on the second floor in the north end of the rear gallery; a double curved brick stairway connecting the second-floor terrace of the L with the garden; a wood interior stairway, south rear, between the second and third floor; a recently removed wooden stairway between the first and second floor of the front galleries; and a fifth stairway constructed in brick leads from the south end of the rear gallery to the top of the cistern house.
3. Floors: The first-floor galleries are paved in Gotland limestone tile. All other floors are pine boarding on beams carried on the exterior and the gallery partition walls.
4. Wall and ceiling finish: The interior masonry walls are plastered. The wood frame walls are sheathed in vertical boarding and papered or painted. On the rear gallery the frame is in finished wood and left exposed. The ceilings are wood with exposed beams.
5. Trim: Except on the ground floor and in the L all rooms have baseboards, molded window and door casings and molded trim around arched openings between the principal rooms of the second floor. The trim is pine.
6. Hardware: The hardware is all wrought iron. The shutters and doors are finished with strap hinges. L hinges occur on the second floor gallery shutter. On the second and third floor the jalousie and jalousie doors have H hinges. Exterior doors and shutters have wall hooks, sill and head hooks and some bar brackets. Interior doors have porcelain door knobs, stamped metal surface bolts and modern locks.
7. Lighting: Electricity has been installed. No signs remain of earlier means of illumination.

D. Site:

1. General setting: The building is located on the southeast side of a city lot, measuring approximately 96' x 108'. It is separated from the building to the north by a 11' drive that leads to the brick paved courtyard. Along the northwest side of the court, built against the rear lot line are stables and servants quarters. The L divides the court and a garden which extends from the street to the full depth of the lot along its southwest side. A small outhouse constructed in brick and coral block is in the rear of the garden. The outhouse contains two privies and a

stuccoed brick bathtub. On the street side the garden has a 9' wood picket fence set between ornamental stuccoed brick pillars, and a wood picket gate. To the rear and side a 6' rubble masonry wall bounds the lot.

The garden and courtyard have several fruit trees and ornamental shrubs, but neglect has obliterated any intended landscape pattern.

Prepared by: Frederick C. Gjessing
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